PSALM XXXIII, xii.

Bleſſed is the Nation whoſe God is the Lord.

THAT there is a God, a ſuperior Being, from whom we derive our Exiſtence, and on whom alone we have our ſole Dependance, appears from undeniable Arguments; but more eſpecially from conſidering the Works of the Creation: for by obſerving the ſurprizing and beautiful Frame of Heaven and Earth, and attending to the Dictates of our own natural Reaſon, we cannot but be convinced that there is a ſupreme Cauſe and Source of all Things; One that directs and ſuperintends the Affairs of Mankind.

FOR what, but an intelligent Cauſe *could call forth Light and Beauty out of Darkneſs and Deformity?* could direct the Motion of Matter? cou'd *ſpread out* the *Heavens like a Curtain, and lay the Beams of his Chambers in the Waters?* What, but a wiſe and knowing Agent cou'd plant within us a thinking ſelf-moving Principle, by which we can reaſon and recollect paſt and ſcatter'd Ideas, and direct ourſelves as we judge proper; and thereby become the Glory and Ornament of the Creation? And as thus there is continually exerted over the Works an uncontroulable Dominion; hence it is that the intelligent firſt Cauſe is call'd in Scripture, *God of Gods, Lord of Lords, the only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,* from whom all Power

SHOULD we descend to the more particular Consideration of those several Works, that are visible in this part of the Universe, which is given unto the Sons of Men; what amazing Instances of his Power and Providence might we every where discover? And how deservedly might we cry out, *How glorious are thy Works, O Lord, in Wisdom hast thou made them all!* What, but the Perfection of Wisdom and Goodness could paint the Fields with such variety of Colours, or could make the *Grass to grow upon the Mountains, and Herbs for the Service of Men?* What, but an All-wise Providence could preserve and protect the little defenseless Part of the Creation from being a constant and present Prey to the greater? *Fire and Water, Wind and Storm are* mindful of, and *fulfill his Word*; and each of these in their respective Ways are subservient to his Will.

ALL things *live, and move, and have their Beings in Him*; They could neither Subsist nor Act, should He cease to supply them with Strength and Vigour; but would soon relapse into their primitive Nothing, should He withdraw his supporting Influence.

HE is the only Proprietor, the absolute Disposer and Governour of all Things; *Whose Voice shakes the Heavens, whose Breath removes the Earth, at whose Presence the Mountains quake, and at whose Pleasure the Hills melt away.*

HE alone is the All-sufficient Helper that can relieve in Time of Need; no Case can be so desperate, no Trouble so difficult, but his infinite Power, his merciful Goodness, and never-failing Wisdom can in a Moment remove, alleviate, or redress.

WERE such Reflections the Employment of our Thoughts, *our Souls would magnify the Lord*, thro' a deep Conviction of his Wisdom and Perfections, *and our Spirits would rejoice in God our Saviour*; for who is sufficient for these Things, but a Being transcendently Great, Wise and Good? *Blessed therefore is the People whose God is the Lord.*

IN my following Diſcourſe, I ſhall ſhew,

Firſt, WHAT it is that entitles a Nation to the Bleſſing of God, the Protection and Favour of Heaven.

Secondly, THAT whatever entitles a Nation to the Bleſſing of God, does by a natural Tendency promote the Welfare and Proſperity of Society.

Thirdly, I ſhall lay down ſome Rules, by which we may be able to obtain this ineſtimable Bleſſing to our ſelves, and likewiſe be inſtrumental in conveying it to others.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew what it is that entitles a Nation to the Bleſſing of God, the Protection and Favour of Heaven.

INNUMERABLE are the Inſtances in Holy Writ of God's eſpecial Care and Regard ſhewn towards particular Perſons, to whom he has promiſed very ſingular Favours, and upon whom He has engaged himſelf plentifully to ſhower down his Bleſſings; provided they act in ſuch a Manner as He has preſcribed.

THE happy State of the *Iſraelites*, above all other People, whilſt they complied with certain Conditions, was *great and unſpeakable*: No Man was ſuffer'd to *do them wrong*, as they *went from one Nation to another, from one Kingdom to another People*; God (as it were) ſpeaking unto them, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.*

WITH a mighty and ſtretch'd-out Arm they were *brought forth from the Houſe of Bondage*; The Sea was divided for their Paſſage; They were ſupernaturally fed from Heaven; and after a continued Series of Miracles, were placed in a *Land flowing with Milk and Honey, whilſt their Enemies were made their Footſtool*; and thus by the immediate Care and Protection of Heaven, became as flouriſhing a People as any on the Earth.

MOSES describes their Bleſſedneſs in the following manner; *Happy art thou, O Iſrael! who is like unto thee?* Deut. xxxiii. 29. What Nation can boaſt of ſo many Bleſſings and Privileges as are enjoy'd by thee? He challenges the whole World to produce the like Inſtance of a happy People: *O* Iſrael, *who is like unto thee, whoſe God is the Lord* Jehovah? In like manner, as he before Appeals to the Judgment of their Enemies, whether their Idol-Deities were to be compar'd to the God of *Iſrael*; *for their Rock*, ſays He, *is not as our Rock, even our Enemies themſelves being Judges.* Deut. xxxii. 31.

THIS was their State, whilſt they continued ſteady and fix'd in thoſe Conditions which God required of them.

BUT, when they broke thro' them, and forgot *God that had done ſuch marvellous Things for them*; when they deſpis'd his Law, and became Followers of Idolatry and Superſtition; when they grew Licentious and Prophane, and had no Regard to that Rectitude of Life, which God deſign'd in all his Laws, the Reverſe of all that had before happen'd, befel them: their Country was brought to Deſolation; their Cities and Temple were conſum'd with Flames; and they were carried away Captives, together with their Kings, Prieſts and Prophets: and tho' they were afterwards reſtor'd to their ancient Liberty, and their Temple rebuilt, and they ſeem'd once more a happy Nation; yet, when they *fill'd up the Meaſure of their Impieties*, and inſtead of attending to their King and Saviour, crucified the Lord of Life; then were they deliver'd again into the Hands of their Enemies, then was their Government deſtroy'd by the *Romans*, and God's Wrath kindled againſt them, inſomuch that He viſited them with the Sword, Famine and Peſtilence; and they were made a *Reproach* among all Nations.

So terrible are the Judgments, ſo ſevere is the Sentence of the Almighty, which He often executes upon a ſinful Nation, when its Wickedneſs is ripen'd, and calls aloud to *Heaven for Vengeance*.

GOD

GOD hath taken Care that the Viciſſitudes and Turns of the *Jewiſh* State ſhould be faithfully regiſter'd and tranſmitted to us, for a ſtanding Example to all the World; to ſhew, that the Condition of all Nations and People, who ſhall act as they did, muſt by Analogy of Reaſon, be the very ſame with that of the *Jews*.

IF therefore Righteouſneſs and Religion, Piety and Virtue, were laid down as Rules and Maxims, which ſhould never fail to raiſe the *Jewiſh* Nation to Wealth and Grandeur; and the Practice of which was the only Way to entitle them to the Bleſſing of God, the Favour and Protection of Heaven; if we would have the Lord to be our God, we muſt reſolve in the like manner to be his People, and be as ſteady in our Duties to him, as He is in his Reward of Virtue: for this is the only method of ſecuring his Mercies to our Selves, and to our Poſterity; the only infallible way both to Exalt, and to Eſtabliſh a Nation.

THEN may we expect that *Peace ſhall be within our Walls, and Proſperity within our Palaces*; that every *Man may ſit down under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-Tree*, and ſee the Accompliſhments of thoſe glorious Promiſes, which *Chriſt* hath made to his Church; *that the Wolf ſhall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid; then ſhall not* Ephraim *envy* Judah, *nor* Judah *vex* Ephraim; *but our Swords ſhall be turn'd into Plough-Shares, and our Spears into pruning Hooks, and no more conſuming or devouring in all God's Holy Mountain.* Which brings me

Secondly, To ſhew that whatever entitles a Nation to the Bleſſing of God, does by a natural Tendency promote the Welfare and Proſperity of Society.

AS Religion conſiſts in the performing our Duties, from a Senſe of the Being of a God, it muſt therefore tend to the good of all Men in general, and of every Man in particular: It muſt Influence us in our Obedience to our Governors and Superiors: It muſt Encourage us to

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ſhew the greateſt Mercy, Love and Humanity one to another, from the ſtrongeſt Motives; obliging us to forgive our bittereſt Enemies, and *to pray for them that hate us, and deſpitefully uſe us*: It cannot permit us *to render Evil for Evil*, but on the contrary, commands us *to do good to thoſe who injuriouſly treat us.*

THERE is no Friendſhip ſo Sacred, no Juſtice ſo Impartial, no Charity ſo Great, no Meekneſs ſo Exemplary, which Religion (eſpecially the Chriſtian) does not recommend and enforce; every wicked Thought, and much more every wicked Deed is to be abhorr'd by its true and genuine Sons, who are commanded to live in perfect Peace and Friendſhip one with another.

AND thus as the private Good of each particular Perſon is promoted, ſo it is eaſy to ſee its Influence on Society; for without this, States would be little elſe than a Concourſe of People, which had nothing to connect or hold them together; and conſequently would very hardly, if at all, be reſtrain'd from hurting and deſtroying each other.

FOR if we obſerve that States are made up of Men of different Intereſts, different Minds, and different Paſſions; ſome of which are naturally vicious, others vexatious and troubleſome; others ambitious, and would always be endeavouring to diſturb and interrupt the publick Peace; and if the latter happen'd to have any Advantage or Superiority in Power; then would they not fail to make themſelves by any means greater and ſtronger, till by repeated Encroachments they had obtain'd that Dominion they had ſet their Hearts upon.

NOW what is ſo likely to curb, or to retrench *theſe overflowings of ungodlineſs*, and to keep Men of ſuch turbulent and contrary Humours within due Bounds towards one another, as the Senſe of a God, and the Inconſiſtency of ſuch Actions with his Will, who is able

able to punish such Wickedness, and has threaten'd to do it *with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of his Power?*

LET the Politician use his utmost Skill and Invention, and let the Magistrate Exert the utmost of his Power and Authority; yet they both must confess that Religion is the best Support of their Government, and that the Fear of God is a Principle, which is able to overrule the Violence, to check the impetuous Passions of Men, and keep the World in Awe.

THEY must own that without it, Man would become a very unruly Creature, would live in a common State of Hostility, and be but little Superior to the Brutal Part of the Creation.

THEY must confess, that Justice is more easily Administer'd, where the Authority of God is own'd, and where He is appealed to as the Judge and Avenger of Falshood and Wrong.

THEY must acknowledge that Property is more easily preserv'd, where the Strong are restrain'd by a Sense of God from becoming the Destroyers of the Weak; and every Man's Rights are defended by a double Security, that of God, as well as that of Men.

AGAIN, where there is no Conscience, there can be no Security of Faith and Trust; Men may without the least Fear or Dread violate their Oaths, oppose their Superiors, betray their Friends, and in short, commit all kinds of the most detestable Crimes without the least Remorse.

NOW, it is not only evident from Principles of Reason, but also from daily Experience, that Temperance, Love of Friends and Neighbours, Faithfulness to Oaths and Promises, Gratitude to Benefactors, Love and Affection to natural Relations, and a gentle and peaceable Disposition towards all Men, are not only useful to attain the Comforts of human Life, Safety and Con-

tentment

tentment, Health of Body and Satisfaction of Mind, but likewise the Happiness of Society, the Preservation of Government, and the securing of all Men, in their just Rights against all manner of Injuries and Oppressions.

And, it is certain from the same Principles, that all contrary Vices have the quite contrary Effects, and tend both to the Destruction of the publick Safety, and of every Man's private Tranquillity; they tend to promote Strife and Contention, Injustice and Perfidiousness, and all other Acts of excessive and unreasonable Self-Love, that respects meerly its own Interest, without any regard to, or concern for the good of Others: And in the same Proportion that these prevail in the Practice of the World; in the same do they diminish the Peace of Society, and the Safety and Quiet of every Man.

It is therefore the Duty of all Persons, who (as the *Psalmist* speaketh) *desire to live well, and would fain see good Days*; in their respective Stations, and by all proper and suitable Means to defend and promote Religion as the best Instrument of their Welfare and Security; for it is of *Universal Influence*; it inclineth Princes to be Just and Gentle, Merciful and Tender-hearted, careful of their Subjects Prosperity, Impartial in administring Justice, Industrious in protecting Right, Zealous in encouraging Virtue, and Vigorous in discountenancing Vice and Immorality. It makes the Subjects loyal, submissive and obedient; and causes them patiently and chearfully *to yield Honour to whom Honour, Tribute to whom Tribute is due*, to discharge all Duties, and to behave themselves in their Stations with all becoming Affection. In short, if every one would have the Persons to whom he stands in any Relation, what they ought to be; if the Prince would gladly have his Subjects loyal and obedient, and the Subjects would have their Prince gracious and good; if every Master would have his Servants

vants honeſt, diligent and obſervant, and they their Maſters kind and courteous; every Parent his Children dutiful, and every Child his Parent tender and affectionate; In ſhort, every Man his Friend faithful, and every one he deals with juſt and ſincere; then ſhould every one in reaſon endeavour, as far as his Power will permit him, to promote Religion, from whence alone all theſe right Diſpoſitions do naturally flow. Which brings me to my

THIRD general Head; namely, To lay down ſome Rules, by which we may be able to obtain this ineſtimable Bleſſing, and be inſtrumental in conveying it to Others.

AND from what has been ſaid, 'tis plain this may beſt be done,

1ſt, BY being exemplary in our Lives and Converſations. And,

2dly, BY Beneficence, Charity and Sincerity.

WHEREVER good Example ſheds abroad its diffuſive Influence, it carries *healing with it under its Wings*, and produces great and agreeable Effects; like the Corn ſown in the *good ground*, that *brought forth ſome thirty, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred fold.*

MEN are generally more prone to be led by the Practice of others, than the Dictates of Reaſon; and are inclined to imitate whatever they ſee done, *whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

THE Effect of a good Example muſt be very great, ſince it is ſo powerful in its Influence, and ſo attractive in its Operations; ſince it ſtirs up a virtuous Emulation in the Minds of Men, and leads them on from one Degree of Perfection to another.

To this it is owing, that the moſt glorious Enterprizes have been atcheiv'd, from this, Learning and Arts have had their ſeveral Riſes and Improvements; 'tis this that emboldens Men to do in the Eye of the World, what they would otherwiſe too often decline.

Now what Remedy can be ſo proper to expel the Poiſon of ill Example, as the happy Antidote of a good one?

Were this but as frequent as the other, Vice would appear in ſuch Diſrepute, that no one could be able to ſtand againſt the Cenſure and Reproach of his own Acquaintance; nor could the Corruption of Manners prevail againſt the Praiſe and Eſteem, which Virtue would every where triumph in.

Give me leave therefore to addreſs myſelf to you in St. *Paul*'s Exhortation; *Do all Things without Murmuring and Diſputings, that ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the Sons of God, without Rebuke in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Generation, amongſt whom ye ſhine as Lights in the World.* Or, in the Words of one that was greater than St. *Paul*; *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works, and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven.*

2dly, We may be inſtrumental in conveying to others this invaluable Bleſſing that attends to Religion, by Beneficence, Charity and Sincerity.

Doing good was the great Employment of our Saviour here on Earth; He was of a meek and humble Spirit, a kind and beneficent Temper; and in all his Works there was an overflowing Vein of Charity.

He

his Subjects; His Zeal for their universal Good, demand the Returns of the most ready Submission and Obedience.

WE, who meet together to solemnize this Day, are not only put in mind of our Country, and of Our KING that governs and protects it, but particularly of HER ROYAL MAJESTY, whose Sweetness of Temper and Affability, whose Esteem of Learning, whose Knowledge of, and whose conscientious Regard to the Protestant Religion, has deservedly made her the Glory and Delight of this Nation. May this Blessing long continue to us; and may SHE have many Returns of this Day, in which the Providence of God laid the Foundations of our publick Happiness; and for which we have so great Reason to rejoice.

WHAT may we not promise ourselves from a Royal Issue, educated under so much Truth, Virtue and Honour? We already see the happy Effects of so much Goodness, and so much Care in a PRINCE, whom we have a Right to boast of as OURS in particular. The whole Nation hath a general Title to his Virtues, WE have a particular Glory in them: And where so much Generosity and Spirit, so much Justice and true Honour appear, we may be secure that this Nation will be establish'd in Peace, and exalted to its highest Pitch of Glory.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

FINIS.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM